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Nutrition and the World Food Supply

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Our Concern: Nutrition Around the World

by Jane Gibson

Home Economics Junior

MILLIONS still go hungry in the world today. Despite great advances in the science of food production and in trade improvements, masses of the world's population are undernourished. Recent World Food Surveys by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations show the continuing complexity of the world's food problem.

To us as Home Economists and college graduates, this is a two pronged problem. We cannot ignore a situation which seriously disrupts family life and deprives millions of the advantages which we are trained to give them. At the same time, it is probably not accidental that the areas of malnutrition correspond highly with the trouble spots around the globe. A satisfactory level of living is important to the future peace of the world.

The central question is whether the world is able to produce enough food to provide an adequate diet for its people, or whether the rapidly increasing population will advance beyond the available food supply.

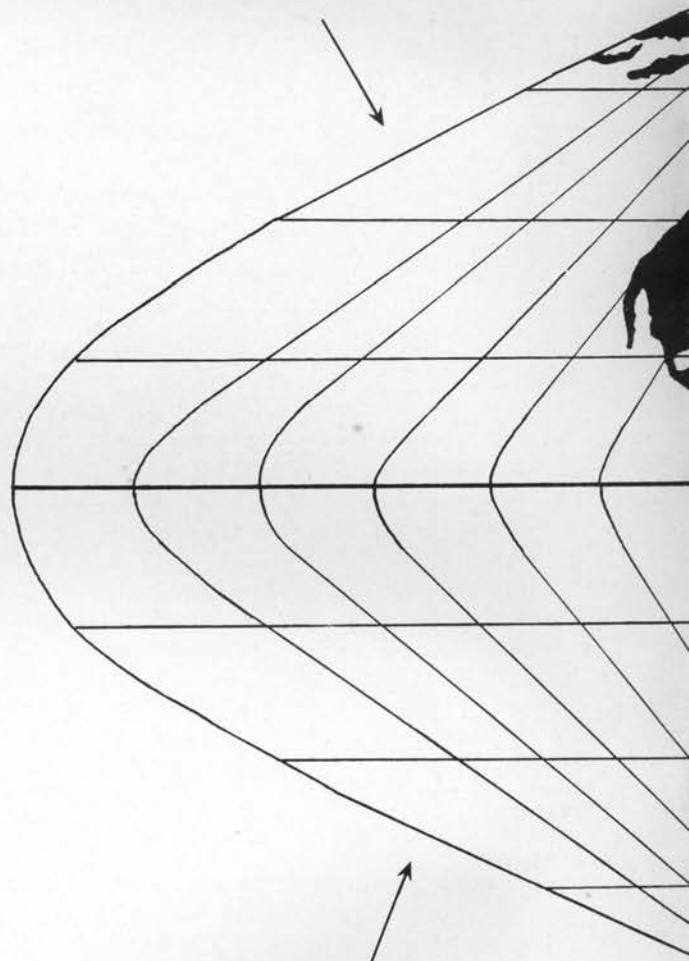
About two and a third billion people now live on earth. This number increases by about one and a half percent a year. There is, at present, not enough food to go around for the large population. Half of the world's people are ill-fed and undernourished, according to the FAO survey. Another sixth does not have good nutrition, although their diet contains adequate calories.

Food production in the world, after recovering from wartime lags, has risen at an average rate of approximately two percent annually in the last five years. But even though food production continues to increase, the unequal distribution between areas of food production make for a continued problem.

Areas of high production tend to have lower population, and those areas of low production have the most dense populations. These same countries of low productivity, because of poor economic levels, cannot afford to buy food elsewhere.

Incomes average \$50 to \$150 yearly in these countries still trying to raise their standard of living. Filling foods such as cereals and root crops, form most of their diet. Protein rich foods, such as milk,

In the United States bountiful food supplies are available to insure adequate, nutritious diets for the population. Even though high food costs call for careful budgeting, the United States housewife has available an average of 3,200 calories a day for each of her family. But even though plenty of protein and vitamins are available, in many families lack of nutrition knowledge results in inadequate diets even here.



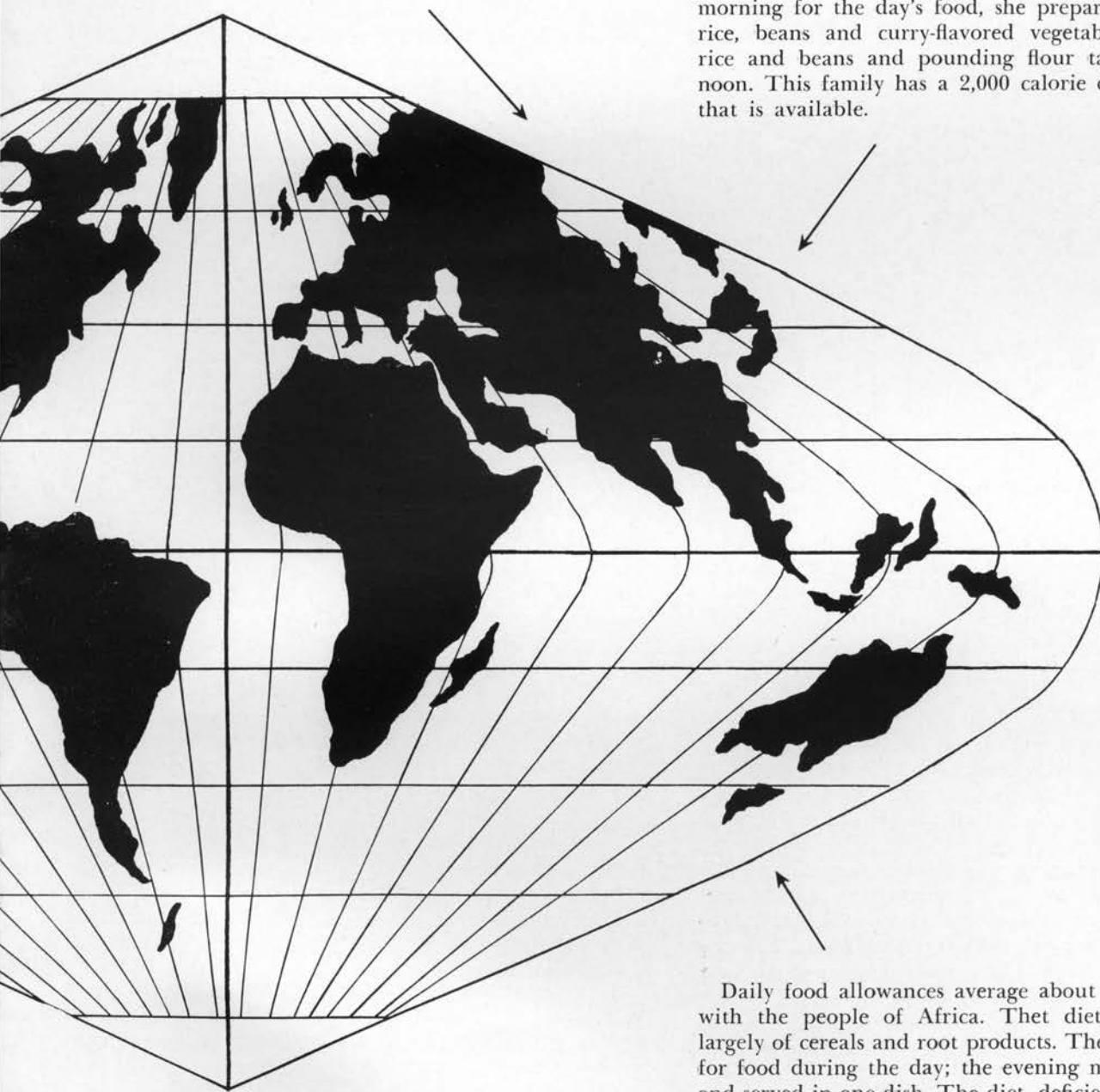
The housewife shopping in the open market of the Central American village puts her few purchases for the evening meal in a wicker basket. She must shop every day since there is no refrigeration for the rice, potatoes, little meat and corn bread that form the diet. The family eats only traditional meals, not knowing the importance of balanced diets.

World Nutrition (Continued on page 13)

1 The World Food Supply

Purchasing some tea, cabbage, rice, soy sauce and a little salt pork take the few yen of the Chinese housewife. She cooks the food in her few pots over a charcoal fire. In her family's diet, cereals account for about three-fourths of their 2,200 calories.

Indian village markets offer beans, rice, fresh meat, and dried fish to the shopper. After shopping in the morning for the day's food, she prepares a lunch of rice, beans and curry-flavored vegetables. Cleaning rice and beans and pounding flour take the afternoon. This family has a 2,000 calorie diet, the most that is available.



Daily food allowances average about 2,300 calories with the people of Africa. Their diet is made up largely of cereals and root products. The family hunts for food during the day; the evening meal is cooked and served in one dish. The diet, deficient in essential nutrients, accounts for disease and stunted growth among the people.

Glasses (Continued from page 6)

make the effort develop the habit. They are particularly desirable for those who need a strong correction or have high astigmatic errors.

"Another reason for unsuccessful cases is incompetent fitting. In general, it is best to buy your lenses from an optician of established reputation and experience in this very specialized field.

"You will be very interested to know, Peggie, that no artificial fluids are necessary today because the new very tiny, thin lenses float on the natural lacrimal fluid of the eye. Contacts stay on by the attraction of liquids in contact with solids.

"One type of lens is made in a size to cover only the cornea or colored part of the eye. Another lens is made even smaller and thinner.

"Your eyes will be fitted by a painless instrument called the keratometer which doesn't touch your eye at all and gives the curve measurement necessary for the manufacture of your lens."

"Doctor, will I feel the lenses?"

"Yes, you will 'feel' them, but it will be merely the sensation of 'touch', and with habit you will become less and less conscious of this. But there won't be irritation. The lens floats on the thin film of tears over your eye and they are so thin and smooth that the eyelid passes easily over them.

"As for breaking, the plastic lens is to be preferred to ordinary glass spectacle lens. For this reason many athletes wear them."

"Doctor, how are the lenses put in? I'm sort of afraid to put something in my eye."

"This is only natural, Peggie. We teach you the simple technique and after a few minutes, you can do it yourself. The lenses are inserted and removed with the fingers. It's as simple as that."

"How long can I wear them?"

"Our objective is to enable you after the accommodation period to throw away your regular glasses. The wearing time depends on you—how willing you are to work with your contacts.

"They cost approximately \$125-\$150 per pair depending on the case. Should you lose them they can be duplicated by prescription and there are reasonable insurance policies available."

"Golly, Doctor, how do I go about getting contact lenses?"

"Sit right down here, Peggie, if I think contacts are desirable for you, I'll give you a prescription."

It's true . . .

Cheese is made in some five hundred varieties, and from the milk of many animals, including reindeer, camels, the llama and zebu, points out a Twentieth Century Fund report.



Of the three major textile fibers—cotton, wool and rayon—cotton leads throughout the world, and constitutes nearly three-fourths of all fiber consumed in the United States, says a Twentieth Century Fund report.

World Nutrition (Continued from page 10)

eggs, meat, fish produced by the farmers are usually sold as cash crops.

The land on which to grow the food is there if we choose to use it. There is possibility of improving farm yields even in advanced territory like Europe. Even more dramatic are the possibilities in Asia and Africa. There are big reserves of land as probably not more than one fifth of the world's cultivatable surface is under cultivation. Even if one tenth of the apparent reserves could be brought into cultivation, it would be enough to provide adequate diets for the existing population. There are other sources which might be developed, particularly the sea. Scientists estimate that with present knowledge and resources, not counting what may come from atomic energy, the earth can adequately feed the present world population and even more.

Food trade still figures into the problem, even though less than ten percent of the food moves in international trade. Prices have gone up. Surpluses are beginning to pile up in countries having dollar supplies; needy countries cannot afford to buy enough food for their population.

The FAO has as its goal the alleviation of these scarcities of food supplies. Beginning in 1943 with individual efforts of missionaries, foundation and other groups, now the agency works through field experts around the world on projects ranging from finding the best rice seed for Thailand to surveying the levels of world nutrition.



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